

## *CLUW News Health Tip*

### **DIABETES**

Do you know the difference between diabetes type I and type II? When you have diabetes, your body can't properly use the energy from the food you eat. In type I diabetes, the body makes little or no insulin. In type II diabetes, the body makes insulin, but cannot use it.

Normally, when you eat food, it is broken down into a form of sugar that is the body's main fuel. This sugar then enters the bloodstream. When the body senses this increase in sugar it sends a signal to the pancreas. The job of the pancreas is to make insulin and send it into the bloodstream as needed. Insulin works by letting sugar leave the bloodstream and go into the cells where it is used as fuel. You have the energy for a full and active life when this happens the way it should.

In people who have diabetes, sugar builds up in the bloodstream instead of going into the cells of the body. Insulin is most important in keeping blood sugar at the right level, but it doesn't work alone. Physical activity and meal planning are very important also. The goal of treating diabetes is to control it by keeping the blood sugar level at a normal level. Keeping your blood sugar level close to normal helps to prevent or delay long term health problems related to diabetes such as kidney disease or eye disease.

No one knows the exact cause of diabetes type I. Persons with diabetes type I must take insulin shots daily. The insulin is necessary in order to live. Persons with diabetes type I need to learn what insulin to use, how much to take, when to take it and how to inject it. Eating about the same amount of food every day makes it easier to keep insulin and food working together. Skipping or delaying meals can lead to problems. Food must be spread out evenly throughout the day to balance the effect of the insulin.

Most people are overweight when they develop type II diabetes. Extra body fat lessens the body's ability to make and use its own insulin. Losing excess weight and body fat is the most powerful treatment for diabetes type II. This is especially true if you have had type II diabetes for ten years or less. Blood sugar levels may go back to normal in some overweight people who lose fifteen pounds or more. Many people with diabetes type II must take diabetes pills to lower their blood sugar level. These pills are not the

same as insulin and will not work to control diabetes type I. They work by helping the body release more of its own insulin into the bloodstream and to use the insulin better.